

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended)

A tube assembly for specimen analysis, comprising:

2 a tube having a lower pipette portion ~~extending from a--~~
~~lower-end-portion thereof,--said pipette-portion-having-~~ with
 4 a passage therethrough for a plug therein, and

a separator having an upper portion sealingly engaged
 6 in a lower portion of the tube, said separator having a lower
 portion ~~of-reduced-cross-section~~ defining a passage and an
 8 end edge, whereby upon the filling of the tube to a
 predetermined level and the centrifuging thereof, centrifuged
 10 liquid ~~passes--~~ and particles pass through said separator
 passage to provide a specimen of accurately predetermined
 12 volume defined below the separator ~~and-above-a-lower-end-of-~~
~~said-reduced-lower-separator-portion~~ end edge and an air
 14 pocket about the separator and above said tube lower pipette
portion.

2. (currently amended)

A tube assembly according to Claim 1, wherein:

2 said separator has a generally funnel configuration, and
an air pocket is defined between the tube, the separator
4 ~~upper~~ lower portion and an end of ~~the~~ a reduced lower
separator pipette portion.

3. (currently amended)

A tube assembly according to Claim 2, wherein [[a]]
2 an accurately predetermined volume of a specimen to be
expressed is defined by said air pocket between a separator
4 lower portion and said tube pipette end portion.

4. (original)

A tube assembly according to Claim 3, wherein the
2 predetermined volume of specimen comprises 0.1 ml.

5. (original)

2 A tube assembly according to Claim 1, wherein said
separator is sealingly engaged by force-fitting thereof in
a tapered portion of the tube.

6. (currently amended)

A tube assembly according to Claim 1, wherein:

2 specimen liquid and sediment are automatically mixed
during centrifuging by operation of the ~~operator~~ separator
4 and an air pocket created thereby.

7. (original)

2 A tube assembly according to Claim 1, wherein said
tube is tapered to narrow toward its lower portion and said
separator is force-fitted in a lower portion of the tube.

8. (original)

2 A tube assembly according to Claim 1, wherein a bead
is disposed about an upper open end of the tube for sealing
engagement with a cap to close the tube.

9. (original)

2 A tube assembly according to Claim 1, wherein said tube
pipette portion passage is tapered inwardly toward its opening.

10. (original)

A tube assembly according to Claim 1, and further
2 comprising:

a plug for sealing engagement in said pipette passage,

4 said plug being disposed in a cup adapted to engage a lower
portion of the tube when the plug is inserted in said pipette
6 passage.

11. (currently amended)

A tube assembly according to Claim 10, wherein:

2 upon removal of said plug from the pipette passage, a
limited lowering of pressure within the tube ~~tends to retain-~~
4 retains liquid from dropping through the pipette passage.

12. (currently amended)

A tube assembly for specimen analysis, comprising:

2 a tube having a pipette portion extending from a lower
end portion thereof, said pipette portion having a passage
4 therethrough,

a plug for sealing engagement in said pipette passage,

6 a cap for sealingly closing an upper open end portion
of the tube, and

8 a separator having an upper portion sealingly engaged
in the tube, said separator having a reduced lower portion
10 defining a passage with an end edge, whereby upon the
filling of the tube to a predetermined level and the
12 centrifuging thereof, centrifuged liquid passes and particles
pass through said separator passage to ~~provide~~ define a
14 specimen of accurately predetermined volume defined between-
the below said separator ~~-lower-portion-and-the-tube-pipette-~~
16 ~~portion-for-expressing-of-the-specimen-upon-removal-of-said-~~
~~plug-~~ end edge and an air pocket about the separator and
18 above said tube lower pipette portion.

13. (currently amended)

A tube assembly according to Claim 12, wherein:

2 said separator has a generally funnel configuration, and
[[an]] said air pocket is defined between the tube, the separator
4 upper portion and an end of the reduced lower separator portion.

14. (original)

A tube assembly according to Claim 12, wherein said
2 predetermined volume of specimen comprises 0.1 ml.

15. (original)

A tube assembly according to Claim 13, wherein:

2 specimen liquid and sediment are automatically mixed
during centrifuging by operation of the separator and an air
4 pocket created thereby.

16. (original)

2 A tube assembly according to Claim 12, wherein said tube is tapered to narrow toward its lower portion and said separator is force-fitted in a lower portion of the tube.

17. (original)

2 A tube assembly according to Claim 12, wherein a bead is disposed about an upper open end of the tube for sealing engagement with said cap.

18. (currently amended)

2 A tube assembly according to Claim 12, wherein said plug is disposed in a ~~cup~~ cap adapted to engage a lower portion of the tube when the plug is inserted in said pipette passage.

19. (original)

A tube assembly according to Claim 18, wherein:

2 upon removal of said plug from the pipette passage, a
limited lowering of pressure within the tube tends to retain
4 liquid from dropping through the pipette passage.

20. (currently amended)

A tube assembly for specimen analysis, comprising:

2 a tube having a pipette portion extending from a lower
end portion thereof, said pipette portion having a passage
4 therethrough,

a separator having an upper portion sealingly engaged in
6 a lower portion of the tube, said separator having a lower
portion of reduced cross-section defining a passage, whereby
8 upon the filling of the tube to a predetermined level and the
centrifuging thereof, centrifuged liquid passes through said
10 separator passage to provide a specimen of predetermined
volume defined below ~~the~~ a separator end edge and above
12 ~~a-lower-end-of~~ said ~~reduced-lower-separator-~~ tube pipette portion,

a plug adapted to seat about said pipette passage to seal
14 the passage,

a spring disposed between the plug and the separator
16 to urge the plug to close the pipette passage, and

a pin on said plug and extending through and outwardly
18 from the pipette passage,

whereby a specimen is dispensed by urging said pin against
20 a specimen holder to displace the plug against the urging of
the spring.

21. (original)

A tube assembly according to Claim 20, wherein said
2 spring is an helical tapered spring.

22. (original)

A tube assembly according to Claim 20, wherein said
2 plug is of at least partially spherical configuration.

23. (original)

A tube assembly according to Claim 20, wherein said
2 pin extends to an upper end of the pipette passage to facilitate
passage of specimen through the passage.

24. (original)

A tube assembly according to Claim 1, wherein:

2 said separator has a lower portion of reduced diameter
defining a passage therethrough, and

4 said separator is of generally hemispherical configuration
to adapt the separator to receive a generally hemispherical probe
6 of an apparatus for the drawing of specimen via a passage through
the probe for automatic processing.

25. (original)

A tube assembly according to Claim 24, wherein:

2 an upper edge portion of said generally hemispherical
separator is tapered to a reduced thin edge portion to engage an
4 inner wall of the tube to prevent specimen sediment from entering
between the separator and the tube wall.